RESEARCH REPORT

ENHANCING TRANSITION SHELTERS THROUGH RENOVATION: CASE STUDIES

FINAL REPORT

EXTERNAL
RESEARCH
PROGRAM

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CMHC ERP Project

Enhancing Transition Shelters Through Renovation: Case Studies

Final Report

Submitted by: Cheryl Hall

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Abstract

The purpose of undertaking this research project is to explore issues facing transition shelters that undergo repair and enhancements. More specifically, this project provides feedback on the renovation process of five shelters that participated in CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP).

Five case studies in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in British Columbia were selected for this work. The case studies included a focus group, key informant interviews and site visits. Although the findings are not necessarily representative of transition shelters across BC or Canada, they do provide some feedback on the renovation process.

The five case studies demonstrate that transition shelters undertake renovations in order to address safety, security and health concerns; improve on-going maintenance and physical operations; and to create adequate and safe program and play areas for children. Some examples of renovations carried out by transition shelters include: installing video surveillance cameras, alarm systems, doors with steel frames, fire and smoke detectors; replacing a furnace, roof, bathroom grouting, outside stairs, and kitchen tiles.

Transition shelter staff noted that there are definite benefits to the program, including improving client services, improving housing stock, and serving as an important funding source. Staff also noted some of the challenges they encountered undertaking renovations including timing of the renovation process versus other shelter priorities, lack of building expertise, and lack of funds to periodically undertake more substantial repairs; e.g. roof repair.

Acknowledgements

This study involved the cooperation and assistance from many individuals, including former residents of a transition shelter, transition shelter staff, contractors, municipal staff and CMHC staff. The individuals have not been named in order to retain confidentiality; however, they all deserve my thanks for sharing their unique perspectives of renovating transition shelters.

Two other members of this research team contributed significantly to the study of renovating transition shelters - Lise Wrigley and Pamela Moss. Ms. Wrigley undertook key informant interviews, site visits and assisted with the focus group. Ms. Moss was centrally involved in the research design and provided helpful comments on the report.

CMHC Project Officers and the BC Regional office staff provided invaluable assistance in soliciting volunteers to participate in this study, reviewing discussion guides and reviewing reports.

Executive Summary

SEP is a federal program aimed at improving health, safety and security at first and second stage shelters across Canada, and creating new shelters and second stage housing. SEP is delivered by CMHC field offices (except for in Quebec and Nova Scotia where the program is delivered by provincial housing agencies under federal/provincial cost-sharing agreements). Although new shelters can be created through SEP, the intent of this study is to examine the renovation aspect only.

Since 1995, the interdepartmental federal Family Violence Initiative (FVI) has contributed $1.9 million per year funding base allocation for the SEP. The purpose of SEP was to (i) upgrade existing shelters to meet health, safety and security needs, and to improve facilities for women and children, seniors and clients with disabilities; and (ii) to fund the construction or renovation of additional shelters and units. As such, the program builds on previous federal FVI and CMHC's previous involvement through the Project Haven and 'Next Step' programs. An evaluation of SEP is targeted for completion and approval in 2001.

This study examined the benefits and challenges of the CMHC Shelter Enhancement Program for five transition shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. To some extent, the delivery processes for SEP are adapted to the specific needs of shelters in different areas of the country. Therefore the experiences of shelters using the program may vary from one area to another, and the findings of the case studies of shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island areas of BC do not necessarily reflect the situation in other geographic areas. In addition, program funding and operating conditions have changed over time; the experiences of shelters that applied for funding in 1995/96 may not be relevant to the current program context because some of the detailed operating guidelines have changed.

Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- Examine the extent of repair and enhancement of transition that have been funded, in whole or in part, through CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program, especially for shelters addressing concerns of safety, security and accessibility;
- Determine how renovations contribute to the specific housing needs of women and children, especially in the needs for security, design for persons with disabilities and the needs of children;
- Highlight lessons learned about the renovation process for Transition House Societies and local and senior levels of government;
- Identify the obstacles in completing repairs to shelters under the Shelter Enhancement Program, including identifying the gaps in current funding for enhancement and renovation (i.e. the needs that cannot be met); and

- Provide recommendations for additional research in this area to identify the practical areas that need attention.

The case studies include several research methods: secondary research, focus groups, site visits and key informant interviews.

Case study summaries in Section 3.1 provide an overview of the findings of site visits and key informant interviews, including general description, renovation description, impacts of renovations, funding issues, lessons learned during the renovation process. All five shelters had received funding for at least two SEP applications. Many of the renovations undertaken addressed safety and security concerns; for example, installing video surveillance cameras, alarm systems, doors with steel frames, fire and smoke detectors; and carbon monoxide detector. Shelters also applied for funding to improve maintenance and physical operations; for example, replacing a furnace, roof, bathroom grouting, outside stairs, and kitchen tiles. Although shelter staff indicated that they would like to address accessibility, they also noted that renovations would be expensive and/or structurally impossible to accomplish.

The focus group report in Section 3.2 summarizes findings, including issues of safety and security, accessibility, living areas, children's areas, emotional space, and renovations and the renovation process. Most of the comments by the participants focused on suggested improvements to the shelter to increase their feelings of safety, security and meeting children's needs.

Section 4 outlines the benefits and challenges of SEP for five transition shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Some of the benefits of the program include improved client services, improved housing stock, and serving as an important funding source. The program challenges include funding challenges and lack of building expertise.

Amélioration des maisons d'hébergement temporaire par la rénovation - Études de cas

Résumé

Le Programme d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement (PAMH) est un programme d'initiative fédérale destiné à améliorer la salubrité et la sécurité des maisons d'hébergement d'urgence et de deuxième étape partout au Canada, et à créer de tels logements. Le PAMH est appliqué par les bureaux extérieurs de la SCHL (sauf au Québec et en Nouvelle-Écosse, où il est appliqué par les organismes provinciaux d'habitation en vertu d'accords fédéraux-provinciaux de partage des coûts). Bien que le PAMH permette de créer de nouvelles maisons d'hébergement, cette étude a pour but d'examiner l'aspect rénovation seulement.

Depuis 1995, l'Initiative interministérielle de lutte contre la violence familiale affecte 1,9 million de dollars par année comme base de financement pour le PAMH. Le Programme d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement vise les objectifs suivants : améliorer les maisons d'hébergement existantes pour qu'elles répondent aux besoins de salubrité et de sécurité, améliorer les installations destinées aux femmes et à leurs enfants, aux personnes âgées et aux personnes handicapées, et financer la construction ou la rénovation de maisons et de logements additionnels. À ce titre, le programme prend appui sur l'Initiative fédérale antérieure de lutte contre la violence familiale et sur la participation antérieure de la SCHL, par l'intermédiaire de l'Opération refuge et du programme L'étape suivante. Une évaluation du PAMH devrait être terminée et approuvée en 2001.

Cette étude a porté sur les avantages et les défis du Programme SCHL d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement pour cinq maisons d'hébergement temporaire situées dans le Lower Mainland et l'île de Vancouver. Les processus d'application du PAMH sont, dans une certaine mesure, adaptés aux besoins précis des maisons d'hébergement dans les différentes régions du pays. C'est pourquoi les expériences des maisons d'hébergement qui ont recours au programme peuvent varier d'une région à l'autre, et les conclusions des études de cas des maisons d'hébergement situées dans le Lower Mainland et l'île de Vancouver ne reflètent pas nécessairement la situation dans d'autres régions géographiques du pays. De plus, le financement du programme et les conditions d'exploitation ont changé au fil du temps; les situations des maisons d'hébergement qui ont demandé du financement en 1995-1996 ne se rattachent peut-être plus au contexte actuel du programme parce que certaines des directives d'exploitation ont changé.

Plus précisément, l'étude visait les objectifs suivants :

- évaluer l'étendue des travaux de réparation et d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement qui ont été financés, en totalité ou en partie, grâce au Programme SCHL d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement, surtout en ce qui concerne les maisons présentant des problèmes de sécurité et d'accessibilité;

- déterminer comment les rénovations répondent aux besoins précis de logement des femmes et de leurs enfants, notamment à leurs besoins de sécurité, aux besoins d'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées et aux besoins des enfants;

- faire ressortir les leçons tirées du processus de rénovation par l'organisme Society of Transition Houses et par les administrations locales et les niveaux supérieurs de gouvernement;

- définir les obstacles à franchir au moment d'effectuer les réparations aux maisons d'hébergement en vertu du Programme d'amélioration des maisons d'hébergement, notamment cerner les lacunes dans le financement actuel destiné à l'amélioration et à la rénovation (c.-à-d. les besoins qui ne peuvent être satisfaits);

- fournir des recommandations visant la nécessité de recherches additionnelles dans ce domaine pour cerner les domaines précis sur lesquels il faut se pencher.

Les études de cas comportent plusieurs méthodes de recherche: recherche secondaire, groupes de travail, visites sur place et entrevues avec des informateurs clés.

Les résumés d'études de cas à la section 3.1 donnent un aperçu des résultats des visites sur place et des entrevues avec les informateurs clés, y compris une description générale, une description des travaux de rénovation, les répercussions des rénovations, les questions de financement et les leçons tirées durant le processus de rénovation. Les cinq maisons d'hébergement avaient toutes bénéficié d'un financement à la suite d'au moins deux demandes dans le cadre du PAMH. Bon nombre des rénovations effectuées visaient à résoudre des problèmes de sécurité; par exemple, l'installation de caméras vidéos de surveillance, de systèmes d'alarme, de portes avec cadres d'acier, de détecteurs d'incendie et de fumée, et de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone. Les maisons d'hébergement ont aussi demandé du financement pour améliorer les opérations matérielles et d'entretien; par exemple, le remplacement d'un générateur d'air chaud, du toit, du coulis de ciment dans les salles de bains, des escaliers extérieurs et des carreaux de cuisine. Bien que les employés des maisons d'hébergement aient indiqué qu'ils aimeraient aborder les problèmes d'accessibilité, ils ont aussi constaté que les rénovations seraient coûteuses ou impossibles à effectuer du point de vue de la construction structurale.

Le rapport du groupe de travail figurant à la section 3.2 résume les conclusions (y compris les questions liées à la sécurité, à l'accessibilité, aux aires de séjour, aux aires de jeu pour les enfants, à une atmosphère de bien-être et aux rénovations), et le processus de rénovation. La majorité des commentaires formulés par les participants portaient sur la les améliorations proposées aux maisons d'hébergement pour renforcer leur sentiment de sécurité et pour répondre aux besoins des enfants.

La section 4 expose les avantages et les défis que présente le PAMH pour cinq maisons d'hébergement situées dans le Lower Mainland et l'île de Vancouver. Parmi les avantages du

programme, notons l'amélioration des services à la clientèle, l'amélioration du parc résidentiel, et l'apport d'une importante source de financement. Quant aux défis du programme, on les trouve au niveau du financement et de l'absence d'expertise dans le domaine du bâtiment.

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1. Background

For many transition shelters, meeting the needs of their clients poses a funding dilemma. Few shelters have sufficient funding reserves to pay for renovations and enhancements required. Operating funds are often barely enough to cover routine maintenance; in fact, many sponsor groups fundraise up to 20 per cent of their operating costs and have insufficient funds set aside for larger repairs.[1] Without the support of the federal initiatives, many shelters would be unable to take on much needed repairs. Transition shelters face particular challenges maintaining and repairing buildings due to:

- need for extra security to protect clients and staff;
- high wear and tear from heavy use and turnover;
- buildings that were not specifically designed to accommodate women and their children;
- buildings that were not specifically designed for this client group;
- accessibility for people with disabilities; and
- accommodation of large numbers of children, from infants to adolescents.

The federal government has provided support to transition shelters through several initiatives, including the National Housing Act Non-Profit Housing Program, Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP), Project Haven and Next Step programs. Although new shelters can be created through SEP, the intent of this study is to examine the renovation aspect only. SEP has met the needs of shelters by providing funding to finance the capital cost of projects aimed at bringing existing emergency shelters up to an acceptable standard of health, safety and security. Capital funding was provided in the form of forgivable loans to undertake mandatory and eligible repairs. Eligible areas for repairs funded under the recent CMHC SEP include:

- basic health and safety;
- appropriate security;
- accessibility for persons with disabilities; and
- adequate and safe program and play areas for children.

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[1] CMHC, 1998. *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Project Haven Program and Update on the Next Step Program Activities.*

1.1 Profile of Canadian Shelters

The number and services offered by Canadian shelters has increased steadily since the early 1970's. The most recent update of the Transition Home Survey from 1997 – 1998 identified nearly 500 shelters with 3,300 units across Canada.[2] Of the 470 shelters for women leaving abusive relationships in operation on April 20, 1998, only 18 existed prior to 1975.

Highlights of the 1997 – 1998 survey include:

- Over 91,000 women and children stay in shelters each year including approximately 48,000 women and 43,000 children;
- The majority of shelters offer a variety of in-house services for residents, including short-term counseling (91%), advocacy (82%), housing referral (82%), and parenting skills (82%);
- The majority of shelters offered services to resident children, including indoor and outdoor recreational spaces (80%), individual counseling (75%), group counseling (53%), and programs for children who have witnessed or experienced violence (53%);
- Many shelters were accessible to women with physical disabilities, including complete or partial access for wheelchairs (64%), services for hearing impaired (33%), or services for visually impaired (13%);
- Shelters provide services to women in the community as well as residents. Facilities reported providing an average of 41 outreach hours per week to supply information, accompany clients to court, meet with clients to discuss possibilities/options and participate in drop-in centers;
- On a typical day, there are over 6,000 women and children staying in shelters;
- On a typical day, shelters receive over 3,500 requests for various services from women who have left the shelter or women from the community;

1.2 Federal Programs for Canadian Shelters

The federal government has supported the creation of transition shelters since the 1970's with capital funding assistance provided by CMHC under the non-

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[2] Statistics Canada. *Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.* Catalogue no. 85-002-XPE Vol 19 (6). The 1997 – 1998 survey summarizes information on residential services for women leaving abusive relationships and their children during the previous 12 months of operation, as well as providing a one-day snapshot of the clients being served on a specific day. 430 of the 470 shelters responded to the mail-out/mail-back census survey, representing a 91 per cent response rate.

profit housing programs of the National Housing Act.[3] Federal government capital funding has assisted the development of more than two-thirds of shelters in Canada.[4] For first stage housing, provincial or territorial, and sometimes municipal governments (as well as Indian Affairs for on-reserve shelters) often provide operating funding for shelters. For second stage housing, the projects are mostly funded from rents paid by residents.

The more recent interdepartmental federal Family Violence Initiative has contributed funds towards transition shelters in Canada through *Project Haven*, *Next Step*, and *SEP*. The Project Haven program spent $22 million between 1988 and 1992 to establish or add transition houses in communities. The Next Step program spent nearly $21 million between 1992 and 1995 to fund the development of 34 second stage and 23 first stage shelters in Canada.[5]

Since 1995, SEP has funded repairs and improvements to existing shelters, as well as providing capital funds for additional shelters.

1.3 Shelter Conditions

An evaluation of the Project Haven and Next Step program by CMHC assessed shelters in terms of their physical conditions, ability to meet client needs, safety and security, accessibility and ability to fund repairs.[6] The 1995 evaluation included primary and secondary research methods: mail surveys, site inspections, key informant interviews and findings from the 1992 – 1993 Transition Home Survey. Most of the shelter conditions described below are based on 371 shelters that responded to the mail survey.

The 1995 study included an assessment of the suitability of shelters in terms of meeting clients' needs. Staff and client groups were generally satisfied that the housing design was suitable for women and children (over 80 per cent). Highest ratings were given for adequacy of basic facilities, accessibility, suitable locations and adequacy of interior play areas for children. Lower ratings were given for having adequate private space for women, office space or counseling space.

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[3] SPR Associates Inc., 1997. *A Place to Go: an Evaluation of the Next Step Program for Second Stage Housing in Canada*. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing.

[4] CMHC, 1999. *Shelter Enhancement Program Evaluation Framework Report (draft)*. Ottawa: CMHC.

[5] Statistics Canada, 1999.

[6] CMHC, 1998. *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Project Haven Program and Update on the Next Step Program Activities*. Ottawa: CMHC. Also see previous evaluations – CMHC, 1995. *Summary Report on the Evaluation of the Project Haven Program and Update on the Next Step Program Activities*. SPR Associates, 1997. *A Place to Go: an Evaluation of the Next Step Program for Second Stage Housing in Canada*. SPR Associates, 1994. *Community Needs and Impacts Study of Project Haven Shelters*.

More than two-thirds of shelters had safety and security features such as intercom systems, steel doors and alarms. Some shelters had additional security features: bars on windows, Plexiglas and frosted glass on ground floor windows. The majority of Project Haven sponsors (95%) felt that their shelters provided safety and security for their clients. Areas for improvement noted by shelter staff included video surveillance, higher fences and night staffing. Staff also noted that specific features designed to enhance security, such as bars on windows, could also create a hazard in case of a fire.

Funding sources for shelter maintenance and repairs varied by sponsor group. The two most common sources for funding major repairs or replacements were additional government funding or from operating funds. Half of the sponsor groups reported that they had set aside funds to cover the costs of major repairs and replacements (such as for furnaces, roof or structural work). However, of those that had set money aside, only 30 per cent thought that the amount of money that they were allocating would be adequate. Many shelters are faced with funding challenges due to fluctuating revenue and insufficient operating budgets. This makes it difficult to plan for and set aside funding for major repairs.

The physical condition of the shelters varied depending on whether they were purpose-built or conversions. Newly constructed buildings (purpose-built) were less likely to be in need of repairs. The majority of shelters in the 1995 study were purpose built; 51 per cent were new construction and 49 per cent were conversions or renovations of existing buildings. The 1995 study examined the physical condition on a sample of 20 Project Haven shelters. The buildings were evaluated in terms of estimated repairs or replacements required to meet NHA or locally prevailing property standards (whichever were higher). Site inspections were carried out on the site, building and two units in each shelter.

Of the newly constructed shelters, only one failed to meet NHA standards. Overall, 12 of the 20 shelters were found in need of repairs. The average amount estimated for repairs was $3,300 per shelter. Assuming that the same proportion of buildings require repairs in the Canadian shelter stock as in the sample, repair costs would total $1.8 million would be required to repair transition shelters. The most common types of repairs needed included replacing smoke detectors, expanding outdoor fences, and general maintenance such as painting, repairing windows and recaulking windows and bathtubs.

1.4 Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)

SEP is a federal program aimed at improving health, safety and security at first and second stage shelters across Canada. CMHC field offices deliver SEP (except for in Quebec and Nova Scotia where the program is delivered by provincial housing agencies under federal/provincial cost-sharing agreements).

Since 1995, the interdepartmental federal Family Violence Initiative (FVI) has contributed $1.9 million per year funding base allocation for the SEP. The purpose of SEP was to (i) upgrade existing shelters to meet health, safety and security needs, and to improve facilities for women and children, seniors and clients with disabilities; and (ii) to fund the construction or renovation of additional shelters and units. Since the purpose of this research is to explore issues facing transition shelters that undergo repair and enhancements, this description of SEP focuses on the renovation aspect only (sample guidelines for BC/Yukon proposal call for SEP are included in Appendix A). SEP builds on previous federal FVI and CMHC's previous involvement through the Project Haven and 'Next Step' programs. An evaluation of SEP is targeted for completion and approval in 2001.[7]

To some extent, the delivery processes for SEP are adapted to the specific needs of shelters in different areas of the country. Therefore the experiences of shelters using the program may vary from one area to another, and the findings of the case studies of shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island areas of BC do not necessarily reflect the situation in other geographic areas. The funding process outlined below outlines the general methods for SEP delivery, however it does not report on regional differences. In addition, program funding and operating conditions have changed over time; the experiences of shelters that applied for funding in 1995/96 may not be relevant to the current program context because some of the detailed operating guidelines have changed.

Transition shelters apply for funding through CMHC regional offices (or provincial housing agencies in Quebec and Nova Scotia) for SEP funding. CMHC guidelines give first priority to mandatory repairs required to bring shelters up to minimum levels of health and safety. Shelters can also apply for eligible repairs to enhance security, accessibility and facilities for children.

The amount of funding available varies between $18,000 and $27,000 per unit, depending on location (southern areas are eligible for $18,000 per unit).[8] The funding is provided in interest-free, fully-forgivable loans for a one year period after work is complete. Loans do not have to be repaid, as long as shelters meet the conditions of their loan agreements[9]. For amounts over the allowable per unit cost, sponsors must also specify how additional amounts will be paid. Costs in excess of the loan amount must be borne by the sponsor group and

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[7] CMHC, 1999. *Shelter Enhancement Program: Evaluation Framework Draft Report*. Ottawa: CMHC. The draft evaluation framework outlines impacts and outcomes that will be assessed for the Five Year Report to be submitted to the Treasury Board.

[8] Groups can receive up to 100% of the capital cost toward construction or acquisition and renovation of new shelters.

[9] Conditions include groups continuing to own and operate the project as a shelter or second stage housing for women leaving abusive relationships.

this contribution must be expended before CMHC advances any funds for work completed.

CMHC reviews the applications and inspects the properties selected for SEP funding. Once the work is approved, sponsors must submit two or three estimates from contractors on the proposed work. CMHC prepares a loan agreement outlining the terms and conditions for the work to commence. Sponsor groups are responsible for ensuring that work is completed and paying contractors. CMHC inspects the work prior to the final loan advance.

2. Description of Research Project

2.1 Reasons for Undertaking this Research Project

This project is one of 22 projects selected for the 1998 Canada Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) External Research Program (ERP). Each year, a national committee consisting of housing experts awards grants in several priority areas. One of the priority topics identified for 1998 was housing people with differing needs. Other topics include housing in the national/international economy, housing affordability, sustainable development, rental markets, housing renovation, and building performance and technical innovation.

Nearly one-half of Canada's transition shelters for women who are leaving abusive relationships and their children are not purpose-built. These shelters are typically conversions or renovations of existing buildings and can be substandard from occupancy standards, program requirements and Building Code perspectives. Ad hoc repairs and larger renovations are often undertaken to improve these conditions.

The purpose of undertaking this research project is to explore issues facing transition shelters that undergo repair and enhancements. More specifically, this project provides feedback on the renovation process of five shelters that participated in CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP). Although the findings are not necessarily representative of transition shelters across BC or Canada, they do provide some feedback on the renovation process.

2.2 Research Objectives

This study examined the benefits and challenges of the CMHC Shelter Enhancement Program for five transition shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- Examine the extent of repair and enhancement of transition that have been funded, in whole or in part, through CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program, especially for shelters addressing concerns of safety, security and accessibility;
- Determine how renovations contribute to the specific housing needs of women and children, especially in the needs for security, design for persons with disabilities and the needs of children;
- Highlight lessons learned about the renovation process for Transition House Societies and local and senior levels of government;
- Identify the obstacles in completing repairs to shelters under the Shelter Enhancement Program, including identifying the gaps in current funding for enhancement and renovation (i.e. the needs that cannot be met); and

"The renovations are very good for the morale of staff and residents. It is slowly looking better and there is more security – that's good for all of us. Also, there are a few women who end up coming back to us and it is nice for them to see improvements here. It makes them feel a little better that we are making some headway."
Transition worker

- Provide recommendations for additional research in this area to identify the practical areas that need attention.

2.3 Approach

The case studies includes several research methods: secondary research, focus groups, site visits and key informant interviews.

"The new furnace has meant that our oil bill has been cut in half and we don't have to worry about it breaking down constantly."
Transition worker

2.3.1 Case Studies

Five case studies were selected for this research in consultation with CMHC staff and a representative from the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses. The purpose of the undertaking case studies was to outline reasons for renovations, types of renovations, local government requirements, special features, cost, building features addressed during construction and describe lessons learned (see Appendix B: Discussion Guides). Eight selection criteria were:

- The project was CMHC funded – the enhancement was undertaken through SEP;
- Shelter staff indicated that they would be willing to participate in the study;
- The transition shelter was already in operation at the time of renovation;
- Shelters were located in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island;
- Higher priority was given to shelters that undertook repairs to address concerns of security, accessibility, and adequate and safe areas for children;
- Represented a range of enhancements, including fire safety, electrical, plumbing, heating, building security, accessibility, and children's areas;
- Shelter may or may not have already undergone previous renovations; and
- Includes both major and minor repairs.

"Our renovations are ongoing. We always have major health and safety issues. This house needs a lot of work. As there is a steady rotation of women here, there is a lot of wear and tear."
Transition worker

CMHC staff submitted the names of five contacts associated with shelters in Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, Victoria and Courtenay. All transition staff said that they would be willing to participate in the study.

Site visits were conducted for each of the five case studies. Researchers faxed a checklist to the transition shelter staff prior to the site visit (appendix). Site visits lasted one to two hours. The purpose of the site visits was to examine renovations, review living conditions and further discuss renovation issues with

staff. Each site visit included a "top-to-bottom" orientation of the transition shelter and lasted approximately two hours.

2.3.2 Focus Group

A focus group was held with women of a transition shelter that had undergone enhancement (discussion guide included in appendix). The focus group was held early in the research process. The purpose of the focus group was to "ground" the research in the experiences of women. Because of safety and confidentiality issues of transition shelter clients, we asked shelter staff for their assistance in identifying women that were interested in the study. Shelter staff also assisted in setting up a place and time for the focus group.

2.3.3 Key Informant Interviews

Once the case studies were selected and the focus group was held, key informant interviews were conducted with the following individuals – transition shelter staff; local government staff responsible for approvals, including planners and inspectors; and project contractors. Two to four key informant interviews were conducted for each case study. Interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes long. Questions were faxed in advance to the participants (discussion guide is included in the appendix). All but two of the interviews were conducted by phone.

3. Findings

"The ideal transition house will give the impression that is NOT a transition house."
Former Resident

The findings section summarizes results from focus group and case study research. Summaries from site visits and key informant interviews are presented in the case study summaries. Focus group results are summarized in Section 3.2. Appendix B contains the discussion guides used during the focus group, key informant interviews and site visits.

3.1 Case Study Summaries

Five case study summaries are presented in Section 3.1 including:

- Evergreen Transition House, Surrey;
- Fraserside Emergency Shelter, New Westminster;
- Hill House, Victoria;
- Lilli House, Courtenay; and
- Powell Place, Vancouver.

"There is no money in the budgets for these types of upgrades. Without this assistance, we would have to do the best we could with fundraising and other grants. We would only be able to accomplish small things and nothing on the scale of the safety issues we have addressed."
Transition worker

Case study summaries provide an overview of the following:

- General description – when the shelter opened, the age of the building, number of units and number of beds, whether the shelter is new construction, renovation or conversion;
- Renovation description - type of renovation, number of renovations and additional renovations planned;
- Impacts of renovation – impacts on the building and residents, including health, safety, health, physical operations, maintenance and funding;
- Funding issues – source of funding, amount of funding, whether additional funds (besides SEP) were required to carry out renovations; and
- Lessons learned – comments made by transition staff, contractors and municipal staff regarding the major successes and challenges, impacts of renovations on the shelter and service to clients.

3.1.1 Evergreen Transition House, Surrey

General Description

Shelter opened	1984	New	no
Age of building	1960s	Existing	yes
Number of units	5		
Number of beds	10		

Renovation Description

Number of renovations 2

Years 1997, 1998

Type of Renovations

Safety enhancements	1998/99
Structural renovations	1997/98

Additional renovations planned

Accessibility – would like to be able to accommodate women with disabilities; i.e. a woman in a wheelchair. Some of the changes that would have to occur include installing ramps, widening doors, providing a way for women to get to the living areas.

Security - Adding metal bars to window.

Health and safety - House requires ongoing upgrades to maintain health and safety standards.

Impacts of Renovations

Safety and security – installed "electronic eye" for entrance so that we could monitor who was coming to the door.

Safety – installed carbon monoxide detectors, upgraded smoke alarms.

Health and safety – were able to conform to WCB regulations that required no smoking was to occur inside the dwelling.

Maintenance/health – upgraded one of the bedrooms so that there was sufficient heat.

Funding - Couldn't have undertaken the renovations without SEP.

Funding

Source of funds	CMHC SEP	1997	$17,600
Additional funds yes		1998	approximately $3,500

Lessons Learned

- Be careful to make sure that proposed changes meet city bylaws (and check with contractor). In our case, the finalized proposal violated city bylaws. As a result, extra money was spent changing plans and meeting codes.
- City staff were very helpful in getting the building permit approved quickly. The process can take up to four weeks; approval was given in two days.

- We are listed with the city as a 'special residential zone' (zoning is similar to surrounding single family housing). This helps with the anonymity, however it can also cause problems when applying for permits if application contradicts zoning bylaws.
- Communication is important. It is important to have direct contact with the caregivers so that you can call and make sure that it is okay to work that day. Also important to sit down with the subtrades and explain about transition houses and confidentiality and sensitivity to people who are traumatized. (External)[10]
- The most difficult renovations to undertake are converting 'regular' houses into group homes. (External)
- Transition staff said that they lacked the building expertise required to adequately evaluate bids and proposals for work. "I don't really know a lot about reliable quotes, building codes, drawing up blueprints."
- Staff suggested bringing in safety consultants to make assessments for particular safety issues and concerns, and possible solutions.
- Would like to have more time between approval and expected date of completion.
- Cheapest bid is not necessarily the best one.

[10] External interviews were held with contractors and municipal staff.

3.1.2 Fraserside Emergency Shelter, New Westminster, BC

General Description

Shelter opened	1992	New	yes
Age of building	1992	Existing	no
Number of units	6	(originally built, but never used, as a duplex family dwelling)	
Number of beds	12		

Renovation Description		***Type of Renovation***	
Number of renovations	2	Outside stairs replaced; kitchen window upgraded; panic button purchased	1998/99
Years	1997, 1998	Drainage system installed in backyard	1997/98

Additional renovations planned

Maintenance – painting, fence repair.

Security - Install secure features for third floor bedroom windows – child safety.

Maintenance/health - Insulate and install heating in clothing exchange area.

Impacts of Renovations

Safety/security - old stairs were a safety hazard; bar on kitchen window prevents young children from falling.

Program/play areas for children – installing the drainage meant that children could actually use the backyard without getting soaking wet.

Funding

Source of funds	CMHC SEP	Anticipated cost	$3,000 per renovation
Additional funds	yes	Total cost	$3,000 per renovation

Lessons Learned

- Be careful to stipulate that everything required is included in the estimate. In the case of our drainage work, the contractor didn't do the work right and didn't clean up after they completed the project. Apparently, the estimate they submitted didn't include 'clean up and haul away'. We had to find money from our operating budget to come up with the extras.
- Earlier health and safety inspection may have revealed that outside stairs required replacement. (External)
- Materials installed at transition shelters should be able to withstand extended use. Shelters require different standard materials than a 'regular' house would carry because more people live in a transition shelter than a home,(External)
- Transition staff are not 'building experts' and lack expertise in bidding and estimating work.

3.1.3 Hill House, Victoria BC

General Description

Shelter opened	1991	New	no
Age of building	1911	Existing	yes
Number of units	7		
Number of beds	18		

Renovation Description

Number of renovations	3
Years	1996, 1997, 1998

Type of Renovation

Security alarm system	1998/99
Furnace/oil tank upgrade	1997/98
Play structure	1996/97

Additional renovations planned

Safety and security - Replace French doors with solid doors.

Maintenance - Maintenance repairs to outside post; replace of wood frame windows.

Safety - Assess for seismic upgrading and overall earthquake proofing.

Accessibility - Make house more accessible and secure.

Security - Replace outside auxiliary lights with ones that stay on; upgrade driveway gate.

Impacts of Renovations

Safety/security - alarm system enhanced the sense of safety for residents.

Program/play areas for children – new climbing structure means less stress for mothers; staff are less occupied with finding activities for children.

Maintenance/physical operations – heating costs reduced by 50%, new furnace does not break down, is less of a fire hazard and more environmentally friendly.

Funding

Source of funds	CMHC SEP	Anticipated cost	$3,000 per renovation
Additional funds	no	Total cost	$3,000 per renovation

Lessons Learned

- We generally give women a 'heads up' that men will be coming in to the house to do estimates or repairs.
- There are some larger repair items that require additional funds to accomplish; e.g. roof repair.

3.1.4 Lilli House, Courtenay, BC

General Description

Shelter opened	1992	New	no
Age of building	1981	Existing	yes
Number of units	6		
Number of beds	11		

Renovation Description

Number of renovations	3
Years	1996, 1997, 1998

Type of Renovation

Security upgrade, structural	1998/99
Safety enhancement, maintenance	1997/98
Security upgrade, maintenance	1996/97

Additional renovations planned

Accessibility – would like the downstairs to be accessible to wheelchairs. This would entail changes to the bathroom, wheelchair ramps to back door.

Security/safety - Remove steel bars on front windows and add bulletproof film.

Impacts of Renovations

Maintenance – new tiles for kitchen and laundry room floors made it easier to look after the common areas.

Safety/security – alarm system, steel doors and frames, video camera and fences helped the women feel more secure.

Safety – safety guard around wood heater makes the unit safer for children in the living room.

Structural – new roof protects the building from leaks. Tree removed that was causing structural damage to the roof.

Shelter is safer and more attractive because of the upgrades.

Funding – Staff said that they would be very challenged to undertake renovations without funding. The only other way to get money for renovations is through fundraising. A lot more staff time would have had to be devoted to fundraising; this would have taken away from direct services. "There is no possible way we could have achieved this on our own."

Funding

Source of funds	CMHC SEP	1998/99	$9,000
Additional funds	no	1997/98	$15,000
		1996/97	$3,500

3.1.4 Lilli House, Courtenay, BC (contd.)

Lessons Learned

- We deal with small companies and know the people by name. This seems to help the contractors respect confidentiality.
- The renovations were very good for the morale of the staff and residents. Women who return to the shelter are glad to see the progress made.
- Some challenges coordinating completion of renovation contract at the same time as meeting year-end for shelter administration for March 31.
- Estimates – in a small community, it is difficult to find three people to provide estimates for certain items.

3.1.5 Powell Place, Vancouver BC

General Description

Shelter opened	mid-1970s	New	yes
Age of building	1986	Existing	no
Number of units	13		
Number of beds	36		

Renovation Description / ***Type of Renovation***

Number of renovations	2	Safety and security upgrade	1998/99
Years	1996, 1998	Kitchen renovation	1996/97

Additional renovations planned

Safety – replace carpeting that created a tripping hazard.

Security - Reconfigure existing rooms; make rooms more secure (for example, install locking closets)

Impacts of Renovations

Maintenance – plumbing renovation made it easier and cheaper to run facility. Plumbers were constantly being called in prior to renovations.

Safety/security – cameras made it safer for women entering and exiting the building.

Funding

Source of funds	CMHC SEP	Cost of renovations	plumbing $18,000 security $5,300
Additional funds	yes		

Lessons Learned

- Renovations can take longer than anticipated.
- March is typically a difficult time to coordinate bidding for interior work by non-profits because contractors are often involved in exterior projects at this time (also year-end for many non-profits). (External)
- A mandatory control lien holdback may be useful to control for deficiencies and ensure that projects are completed on time. During the plumbing project, one contractor left part way through the work, and the next person was less effective as a project manager.
- Likes the process of completing the work prior to receiving payment This is the norm in the construction industry. CMHCs turn-around time for processing payment has been satisfactory. (External).

3.2 Focus Group Report

3.2.1 Focus Group Background

A focus group with three former residents of a Victoria transition house was held on June 23, 1999. The purpose of the focus group was to gain a better understanding of women's housing needs. More specifically, the focus group allowed women to tell their story of living in a transition house and identify features that may be particularly relevant from a resident's perspective. Although the findings of the focus group are not necessarily representative of all transition house residents, and may not specifically be related to transition shelter renovation, they provide some feedback on suggested improvements to the shelter to increase their feelings of safety, security and meeting children's needs.

Eight questions were selected for the focus group. The questions were asked in a conversation format, and not necessarily in the order that they are presented below. The key topics discussed during the focus group include:

"If our children are in a kid-friendly environment, if it's physically safe for them, and we can be near them but also have a little space to ourselves without hassle, then the kids are more relaxed and so are we."
Former Resident

1. Can you tell us your story about living at the transition shelter – what do you think are the most important features of a transition shelter? (include length of stay, satisfaction with suite, etc.)
2. How would you rate the transition shelter in terms of your needs for safety and security? Are safety and security features adequate? Do they need improvement?
3. What are physical conditions like in the building; e.g. space, upkeep, bathrooms, kitchen, etc?
4. Are there sufficient areas for children?
5. Is the transition shelter in need of basic repairs or other improvements?
6. Do you have any suggestions or comments regarding the type of improvements that were needed at the transition shelter? Comments on improvements undertaken?
7. What do you think is a good measure of a renovation's success?
8. Do you have any suggestions or comments regarding points to consider in granting funding for renovations? Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

3.2.2 Women's Participation in the Focus Group Process

Each of the three women provided feedback on the focus group topics. The eight topics were asked in a conversation format and were discussed as they arose.

All three women commented on their appreciation of being included in this study; they felt that others could benefit from their experience.

3.2.3 Responses

Responses to the eight topics have been grouped below in point form, by theme: safety and security, accessibility, design of living areas, children's areas, emotional space and renovations and the renovation process.

Safety and Security Issues

"The thing is when you are in this sort of situation, you are exhausted. You don't have the capacity to be running after your child and you don't want to go outside."
Former Resident

- Women's safety and security concerns centred on safety for their children (inside and outside the house) and their own personal safety (husbands and partners knowing where they were).
- Women were concerned for their children's' safety. Any features that kept their children safe and secure were appreciated. Women suggested: having play space for children on the same floor as other living areas so that there is no fear that another child would leave the stair gate open.
- Having a secure entry and exit door helped women feel safer inside, however it also created a potential for increased fears of being left outside. When a woman arrives at the house she needs to press an intercom button to let people know that she is there and can be let in. The button rings through to the office. If staff are not in the office, the woman may have to ring a few times in order to be let in.
- Would like parked cars to be concealed from the street.

Accessibility

- Women said that it would be difficult to accommodate anyone with mobility restrictions at the transition shelter.

Design of Living Areas

Former residents offered many comments on their living conditions at the transition shelter. These comments have been grouped by area/feature.

"We need to feel worthy of a nice place to stay. It is pride that gets you through."
Former Resident

a) Kitchen

- Women described the kitchen as a focal point in the home. However, for safety reasons, children were not allowed to be in the kitchen while women are cooking. This posed some difficulties for residents, although they appreciated why the conditions were imposed.
- Women said that the ideal eating area would have enough space to accommodate all women and their children.
- "Kitchen is far too small, especially when you get a few of us in there. The kitchen could be enlarged. There is a room next to it that just holds a fridge and a freezer. Expand the kitchen and knock a hole in the wall that separates the kitchen from the living room. That way we can work in the kitchen but still see our kids as they play. They can see us too. That way

you aren't asking another resident, who is already stressed out herself, to watch your kid for a minute and you don't have to make arrangements with staff. If that isn't possible then at least let us have us baby monitors in the kitchen so we can listen for our kids and still cook."

b) Bedrooms

- Residents referred to their bedrooms as a "place of refuge" and a space to get away from everyone else in the house. Bright, cheery rooms with sufficient storage space for clothing and personal items were appreciated.
- "My bedroom is the one place that I can feel completely safe."

c) Telephone area

- Women noted that telephones are very important in helping them getting on with their lives. And it is important to have a private place to discuss business matters. Women had access to a resident phone at the house, but there was little privacy. Women suggested having a small room with a writing table, pens and sufficient space to accommodate very small children.
- "We need a place where the whole house doesn't hear our business. All these women have 30 days to get everything together and there is a lot to arrange."

"Some of us have an ex-partner driving around neighbourhoods looking for us. Our cars can't be visible from the street."
Former Resident

d) Office/Staff area

- Women talked about the importance of having a good office area; if workers have a good working environment, they are more likely to have positive working relationships. Indirectly, the office area affects women by creating a positive place for transition house staff to work.
- "If the staff are well rested and taking care of themselves, have a less cluttered office and a staff room where they can rest, even sleep and shower, then they are able to give us better service, are able to listen better and we don't have to worry so much about their needs and that we are inconveniencing them."
- "Office is far too cramped and crowded. It is not comfortable and certainly not a good place to meet with a worker. And I feel that it is inappropriate for the worker to meet me in my room. It is important for the workers to feel good about their work space too."
- "Staff need to care for themselves, because if a staff member is over-tired or stressed, they can't hear what people have to say. ...Staff members are kind of like parents to adults and they need to care for themselves, just as we have to care for ourselves so that we can take care of our kids."

e) Counselling area

- Residents discussed the need to have a private place for "one-on-one" discussions. Meeting in the staff room can sometimes make residents feel like they are overly exposed and in the way. Bedrooms are not an appropriate place for counselling. And if in the sitting area, women talked

about wanting to get the issue discussed quickly in order not to interfere with other's activities.

f) Storage Space

- Residents said there was a general lack of storage space at the house. Although the women didn't have many personal possessions, they suggested that having storage space available for the women would help them make the transition to being on their own.
- "I left with only what I could carry. But even if I could get my stuff, where would I put it?

Children's Areas

- Residents offered many comments on living conditions for their children at a transition house. One woman said that the reason that she came to the transition house in the first place was for her children; therefore her children's experience at a transition house was just as important as her own. Women wanted children to be able to play safely and be nearby. And they preferred to be able to look after children on their own rather than having to organize to look after other women's children; e.g. having others watch children when meals were being prepared.
- "If our children are in a kid-friendly environment, if it is physically safe for them and we can be near them but also have a little space to ourselves without hassle, then the kids are more relaxed and so are we."
- "We feel pressure to keep our kids quiet. It would be much better if all adult stuff was moved upstairs."
- "If the children are taken care of, we feel we can relax more. ...All we want to do is sit on a comfy couch with a cup of tea, watch our kids playing close by and 'veg'."
- "This is a time when kids are going to be acting out. If we can alleviate this as much as possible, there is more harmony. Kids want to be near their moms but also have a little space. And we want to be able to watch our own kids – not making complicated arrangements with people to watch them while we do something that would have been so easy in our own home."
- Backyards can be small and intimate. A large yard can make women feel vulnerable. A small play area just outside glass doors so that the children could get fresh air and play close to the house was preferred.
- Solid fences were preferred to chain link fencing – women didn't like the fencing being "see through"; some children could also climb the fencing.
- "The thing is when you are in this sort of situation is that you are EXHAUSTED. You don't have the capacity to be running after your child and you don't want to go outside. We don't have a lot of energy to be in a big yard and we don't feel safe. Better to have a smaller, safer yard which is walled off."

"We want to be able to watch our own kids – not making complicated arrangements with people to watch them while we do something that would have been so easy in our own home."
Former Resident

Emotional Space

- Residents were very aware of the need to focus on self-esteem. They said that any enhancements in making the shelter "more cheery" and more liveable, would result in helping the women feel better about themselves.
- "Visual harmony is important in feeling secure emotionally. To have a house that is safe and clean creates a feeling that a woman has escaped and that she is a worthy person deserving of a decent place to stay."
- "I loved the house. It felt safe, respectful, nurturing and supportive. I loved it if you can love any transition house. However, there is not enough space. One feels an obligation to leave as soon as possible. At least I did."
- Interior condition has an impact on feeling good; e.g. "drab colours make me feel dragged down as well".
- "The ideal transition house will give the impression that it is **NOT** a transition house."
- "It is pride that gets us through. We tend to feel like we are at the bottom of the barrel. We need to have a sense of self-worth, like we are worthy of a nice place to stay."
- Outreach is important. The residents talked about making emotional connections to supportive people. A call once a week from someone they were already connected to really helped get over that lonely period.

Renovations and Renovation Process

- Residents offered few comments on renovations that were carried out at transition shelters. The renovations that occurred at the shelter were secondary to other things happening in the women's lives.
- The only comment residents made on the renovation process were for CMHC to expand eligible criteria to include enhancements for staff of transition shelters.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The benefits and challenges of the SEP for five transition shelters in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island provide a range of issues encountered during the renovation process. This section discusses the findings in terms of the five research objectives outlined in Section 2.2. Program benefits and challenges, as well as obstacles to renovation and recommendations for improvement are outlined below.

4.1 Addressing Safety and Security

- In all five case studies, some funding was applied to improve safety and security of shelters. Safety and security addressed safety of children, protection from abuser, physical safety within/around the house and a feeling of emotional safety.
- Examples of safety and security enhancements included video surveillance cameras, alarm systems, doors with steel frames, fire and smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, concealed parking and fences.
- Several shelters were planning for seeking SEP funds for additional safety and security improvements; for example, installing panic buttons, replacing glass doors with solid doors and improving lighting.

4.2 Improved housing stock

- Several of the renovations undertaken by shelters increased the lifespan of shelters; e.g. replacing a roof protected one shelter from leaks.
- All shelters addressed maintenance issues that improved shelter conditions; e.g. furnace replacement, bathroom grouting.
- Renovations made it easier to maintain shelters; new tiles for kitchen and laundry areas in one shelter made the floors easier to keep clean.
- Renovations can make it cheaper to run a shelter; e.g. replacing a furnace cut the fuel bills by half for one shelter.

4.3 Accessibility

- Although all staff expressed interest in making their shelters more accessible for women with disabilities, they also noted that renovations were expensive and/or structurally impossible to accomplish.
- The initial design of the shelters limited improved accessibility. For some shelters, widening doorways and building ramps would increase accessibility; for others it would mean adding elevators to reach upper floors, or redesigning structural walls.

4.4 Important source of funding

- All shelter staff said that renovations would not have been able to be undertaken without the assistance provided by SEP. Transition shelters have limited operating budgets, and very few have replacement reserves set aside for larger renovations.

4.5 Obstacles to the renovation process

- Some shelters experienced difficulties in meeting suggested timelines for getting quotations from contractors or completing renovations. These difficulties usually were a result of administrative or operational priorities versus renovations (year-end was often provided as an example).
- All shelters said that their lack of building expertise created difficulties in evaluating proposals.

4.6 Lessons Learned

- Lessons learned are summarized in Section 3.1 for each of the five case studies. These include specific suggestions such as ensuring clear communication between contractor, transition staff and clients; knowing what work is included in the contractors' quotes; and installing high quality products that can withstand heavy use in shelters.

The results of this research clearly demonstrate that the SEP serves as an important source of funding for transition shelters wishing to undertake renovations. Renovations improved health, safety and security for residents and their children, as well as contributing towards on-going maintenance of the shelters.

Appendix A:

CMHC Shelter Enhancement Program Description

CMHC SCHL

British Columbia and Yukon
Regional Business Centre
Suite 400 - 2600 Granville Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6H 3V7
Tel: (604) 737-4185
Tel: (604) 737-4125

Centre d'activities regional de la
Columbie-Britannique et du Yukon
2600 rue Granville, Porte 400
Vancouver, Colombie-Britannique
V6H 3V7
Tel: (604) 737-4185
Tel: (604) 737-4125

SEP Budget for 2000

The Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) - Renovation, introduced in 1995, has been extended. The introduction of the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) - New Project was made in the January 2000 announcement. Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation is pleased to provide you with the enclosed information on how to apply for a forgivable loan under this two programs.

Since no operating subsidies will be provided by CMHC, this funding will be limited to projects currently receiving operating funding from the provincial government or Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (DIAND).

To qualify for funding, sponsors must be non-profit corporations, or charities and must have the operation of housing for women and children or youth who are victims of family violence as a principal objective. Funding under the SEP - Renovation program will be secured by a loan agreement with the forgiveness earned over a 1 year period. Funding under the SEP - New Projects program will be secured by a mortgage registered in favour of CMHC for a 15 year period.

Applications will be approved on a 'first-come-first-serve' basis until the budget has been fully expended. The deadline for applications to be submitted is February 29, 2000. All applications received at that date will be considered, however, priority will be given to those projects requiring mandatory repairs. Please send your applications by mail to:

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
BC/Yukon Business Regional Centre
Shelter Enhancement Program
Suite 400 - 2600 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC
V6H 3V7

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SEP - RENOVATION PROGRAM

WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible sponsors of existing shelters for victims of family violence.

WHO ARE ELIGIBLE SPONSORS?

Eligible sponsors are non-profit corporations or charities which have the operation of housing for women and children or youth who are victims of family violence as a principal objective; and First Nation Band Councils.

WHAT PROPERTIES ARE ELIGIBLE?

A property is eligible if it is operated by an eligible sponsor and meets the needs of women and their children or youth who are victims of family violence; and the property must be substandard or deficient and require major repairs.

WHAT WORK IS ELIGIBLE?

Those repairs, modifications or additions required to bring the property up to minimum levels of health and safety standards. Repairs must address one of the following categories:

- fire safety;
- electrical;
- plumbing;
- structural;
- heating;
- building security;
- accessibility; and
- children's area (including program space and permanent play structures in shelters serving families

HOW IS THE ASSISTANCE MADE AVAILABLE?

Assistance is in the form of a forgivable interest free loan earned over a one year period from the Interest Adjustment Date. The loan does not have to be repaid provided the sponsor abides by the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement.

HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

The assistance available must be committed by March 31, 2000. The maximum assistance per unit/bed-unit various according to the 2 rehabilitation zones;

Zone 1:	Southern areas of B.C.	$18,000
Zone 2:	Northern areas of B.C.	$21,000

.../2

WHEN ARE THE FUNDS ADVANCED?

Funds will be advanced when the Loan Agreement has been executed and returned to CMHC, the work has been completed and inspected by CMHC, and any applicable sponsors' share of costs have been contributed to the project.

HOW TO APPLY?

Submit a complete application package to CMHC by February 29, 2000.

This must include:

- a CMHC 3007 form (copy enclosed);
- a description of the work the Society would like to undertake, along with your estimate of the funding to complete the work and;
- a copy of your Society's Incorporation Documents.

.../3

SEP - NEW PROJECTS PROGRAM

WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible sponsors who will create, own and operate a shelter for victims of family violence.

WHO ARE ELIGIBLE SPONSORS?

Eligible sponsors are non-profit corporations or charities which have the operation of housing for women and children or youth who are victims of family violence as a principal objective.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

Any proposed project which creates additional shelter spaces or second stage housing accommodation for women and their children or youth who are victims of family violence

WHAT COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

Costs associated with the construction or purchase/rehabilitation or conversion of the residential portion of a project are eligible.

HOW IS THE ASSISTANCE MADE AVAILABLE?

Assistance is in the form of a forgivable interest free loan earned over a 15 year period from the Interest Adjustment Date. The loan does not have to be repaid provided the sponsor abides by the terms and conditions of the mortgage.

HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

The assistance available must be committed by March 31, 2000. Eligible sponsors may receive funding for up to 100% of the project capital costs.

WHEN ARE THE FUNDS ADVANCED?

Funds will be advanced once a CMHC inspection is completed.

.../4

HOW TO APPLY?

Submit a complete application package to CMHC by February 29, 2000.

This must include:

- a CMHC 2849 form (copy enclosed);
- a written proposal outlining the project development plan as it relates to the requirement of the program;
- Incorporated Societies are to provide copies of their documentation;
- Unincorporated groups must complete their non-profit incorportation prior to final approval of their application.

Appendix B:

Discussion Guides

Case Study Summary

Shelter Description

- Name of shelter
- Age of Shelter (when/date shelter opened)
- Newly constructed building when the shelter moved in or an existing building (if existing, how old is the building?)
- # of units/beds
- General description/unique characteristics
- Brief description of renovation being undertaken
- Funding and funding partners (e.g. before SEP, before 1995 and with SEP)
- Number of separate SEP loans the shelter has received

Description of Renovation Undertaken

- General condition of shelter prior to renovation
- Detailed description of renovation being undertaken
- Type of work e.g. structural, electrical, plumbing?
- Improved access for persons with disabilities?
- Upgraded security features?
- Add any special facilities for children (inside/outside)?
- Added any new bedrooms/units to expand capacity of the shelter?
- Type of Renovation - mandatory repair, eligible repair
- Condition of shelter after renovation
- Previous renovations/repairs undertaken (by suite and by building)
- Additional renovations/repairs planned

Previous Renovations/Repairs Undertaken

- When were previous renovations/repairs undertaken
- Condition of shelter after renovation

Cost of Renovation

- Anticipated cost
- Actual cost
- If figures are different, why

Length of Time to Complete Renovation

- Anticipated
- Actual
- If figures are different, why

Additional Funding Partners for Renovations

- (if applicable)

Lessons learned

- Major successes
- Major challenges

Focus Group Discussion Guide

1 Can you tell us your story about living at the transition house – what do you think are the most important features of a transition shelter? (include length of stay, satisfaction with suite, etc.)

2 How would you rate the transition house in terms of your needs for safety and security? Are safety and security features adequate? Do they need improvement?

3 What are physical conditions like in the building; e.g. space, upkeep, bathrooms, kitchen, etc?

4 Are there sufficient areas for children?

5 Is the transition house in need of basic repairs or other improvements?

6 Do you have any suggestions or comments regarding the type of improvements that were needed at the transition house? Comments on improvements undertaken?

7 What do you think is a good measure of a renovation's success?

8 Do you have any suggestions or comments regarding points to consider in granting funding for renovations?

9 Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

Discussion Guide – Transition Shelter Staff

1. What type of renovations were planned at _____? e.g. major repair, eligible repair, general description
2. Were these different than the renovations that were eventually carried out? If so, why?
3. What was your main reason for applying to the CMHC Shelter Enhancement Program? i.e. what features of the shelter were you trying to address in undergoing the renovation?
4. Did you undertake any repairs/improvements to bring the building up to municipal building code or fire safety code? Does the building now meet these codes? If not, what else is needed to meet these codes?
5. What was the cost of renovation? Was the actual cost different than the initial budgeted amount? If so, why?
6. How did you fund the renovation? Was Shelter Enhancement Program funding your soul source of funding? Did you face any challenges related to your source of funding for the renovation?
7. Did you face any funding challenges as a result of undergoing renovations? If so, please describe. e.g. any impact on operating budget?
8. Did you face any safety or security issues for your clients while undergoing renovations? If so, what were they and how did you address them?
9. How long did it take to complete renovations? Was this different than time budgeted? If so, why?
10. While renovations were being undertaken, did you make any make any adjustments to make temporary living conditions more acceptable for the your clients? If so, please describe.
11. Were any previous renovations undertaken? If so, describe the nature of the renovations and when they were undertaken? Did they involve SEP funding?
12. Do you plan additional renovations in the future? Please describe. Do you intend to apply for SEP funding?
13. Do you have any suggestions for CMHC to simplify the process for renovations? (application, approval, implementation, funding amounts)
14. What were impacts of the repairs on the shelter and the service to your clients? How did the repairs improve the quality of conditions for your clients? Did the repair result in any improvements on the physical operating conditions; e.g. did they make it easier or cheaper to run the buildings?
15. What improvements would have been undertaken if the Shelter Enhancement funding was not available; i.e. Would you have undertaken the same repairs/improvements? Would the repairs/enhancements been undertaken in the same time period?
16. What were your major successes in undergoing renovation? i.e. What went well?
17. What were your major challenges in undergoing renovation? i.e. What could be improved?

Discussion Guide – External Agencies (municipal, contractors, external funding agencies)

1. What was your role in the renovation of _____?
2. What were your agency/staff expectations/requirements in order for renovations to proceed? e.g. local governments may require a building or development permit.
3. Was there anything different about this renovation project compared to other renovation projects you have been involved with? e.g. Are there different challenges and issues associated with the renovation of a transition shelter compared to other renovations?
4. Were there any deviations to the scope of work that you were assigned? Where did these changes originate? Did this pose any challenges to your agency or staff?
5. Do you have any suggestions for CMHC to simplify the process for renovations? (application, approval, implementation)
6. Do you have any views on how the Shelter Enhancement Program might be improved?
7. What went well during the renovation process?
8. What were your major challenges during the renovation process? i.e. What could be improved?